



# Allandale Neighbor

Feb 2008  
Vol 23, Issue 2

DISTRIBUTED TO MORE THAN 3,100 HOMES BY THE ALLANDALE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

## McCracken Shoots Down Allandale Town Center Proposal

*Steven Zettner*

On Monday, March 17, Austin City Council Member Brewster McCracken rebuffed a proposal by ANA and two other north central Austin neighborhood groups to modify the City's plan for Vertical Mixed Use (VMU) on Burnet Road and Anderson Lane. McCracken hinted that modifications to VMU proposed in the "Two Nodes" plan would not be acceptable to developers, who would ignore VMU in favor of traditional commercial development.

The plan, crafted by a local advocacy group called Sustainable Neighborhoods, had the support of the ANA and of the North Shoal Creek Neighborhood Association development subcommittee. All three groups attended the meeting.

McCracken did express support for prioritizing new parks to support VMU areas. He said he would consider a neighborhood's "Opt-in/Opt-out" proposals for adding or removing VMU to properties on a lot-by-lot basis.

ANA will lobby other Council members over the coming weeks, and will reach out to homeowners living behind

potential VMU properties along Burnet Road for their support on removing shallow lots along Burnet Road from inclusion in VMU and for supporting the Two Nodes approach where VMU is concentrated at the North Loop and Burnet and Anderson Lane and Burnet locations. ANA's recommendations are scheduled to reach the City Planning Commission in April and the City Council in May.

VMU is a new zoning category that provides an additional development choice. Developers can either build a

*Continued on page 22*

### Issue Highlights:

ANA President's Letter .....	2
VMU Update .....	3
Tree Trimming .....	4
Allandale Garage Sale—May 2nd ...	5
Neighborhood Safety Committee	
Call for Block Captains .....	6
No Pile Left Behind!—Poop Pollutes our Ponds and Creeks! .....	7
General Membership Meeting—	
Minutes, March 27, 2008 .....	8
Revising ANA's Bylaws .....	9
Green Neighborhood .....	9
30 Years and Still as Popular as	
Ever—The Omelettry .....	10
Celebrate Allandale Picnic .....	12
Electric Vehicles in Allandale ...	14
Mobile Food Establishment	
Restrictions in Allandale .....	15
ANA Votes to Prohibit Parking of	
Motorized Vehicles on Front Yards ..	15
Allandale Calendar update .....	16
Gullett Good News Column ...	17
Dog Talk: Children and Dogs ...	18
Constable's Notebook .....	19
Fire Ants are Back .....	21
Tyke and Bike Ride .....	24

**Have you renewed your membership?**  
**The next ANA EC Meeting is on April 24**

## The Allandale Neighbor

is published bimonthly by the  
Allandale Neighborhood Association (ANA)

[www.allandalereporter.org](http://www.allandalereporter.org)

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ADVERTISING Cathy Savage, 680-6281  
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PRINTER Worley Printing, 478-4064

A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR  
ADVERTISERS AND CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

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### ANA Executive Committee

PRESIDENT Tom Linchan  
VICE PRESIDENT vacant  
TREASURER Joe Reynolds  
SECRETARY Mary Jean Matus  
MEMBERS Margie Gordon, Dan Jones,  
Cynthia Keohane, Paulette  
Kern, Donna Beth  
McCormick, George Roman,  
and Laura Slaughter

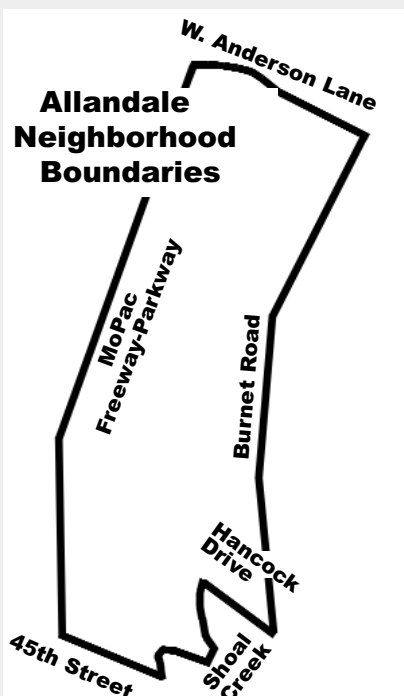
ANA General Meetings are held March and September  
on the fourth Thursday. The Executive Committee  
meets at 6:30 p.m. at the Yarbrough Library, 2200  
Hancock Drive, on the fourth Thursday every month.  
Meetings are open to the public.

### Committees

BEAUTIFICATION Linnea Anderson  
BYLAWS Dan Jones  
COMMUNICATIONS Tom Linchan  
EVENTS Joe Reynolds  
MEMBERSHIP Joe Reynolds  
NOMINATING vacant  
ZONING AND PLANNING Paulette Kern

### Allandale Police District Representative

David Crowder, 974-5545,  
[david.crowderjr@ci.austin.tx.us](mailto:david.crowderjr@ci.austin.tx.us)



## ANA President's Letter

Tom Linchan

The 2nd Annual Celebrate Allandale picnic has come and gone. Once again it was a good day in the park with friends and neighbors—good music and food, happy children and dogs and the perfect mix of weather, setting, and events to make for a great neighborhood gathering. Thanks to our events committee headed up by Mary Jean Matus for making this year's picnic a hit. If you weren't there, I am sorry you didn't make it. The best we can do is bring it to you in photos and a short write-up in this newsletter.

Welcome to our Vertical Mixed Use (VMU) edition. In the past month or so, representatives of Allandale Neighborhood Association and Sustainable Neighborhoods have been meeting with Planning Commission and City Council members to talk about VMU in Allandale. We're not having much success. The city is determined to finalize VMU zoning along the designated transit corridors in the central city (ours is Burnet Rd and Anderson Lane) and to have that zoning apply to as many commercial tracts as possible. To me it appears it's more important to the Council to get it done than to get it right. I spoke on behalf of Allandale Neighborhood Association at a March hearing having to do with the North Loop tract along Burnet Road. I was asking that the decision about VMU for that tract be delayed until ANA came before the council with its full set of VMU recommendations in May. They voted 7-0 against the delay. They also approved VMU zoning for the tract with the full set of density incen-

tives. Normally, the Council honors a neighborhood's first request for postponement so I took this as an indication for what to expect when our full VMU application does come up for review.

It is hard to get interested in VMU until you realize the implications it has for the neighborhood. None of this is necessarily at our doorstep. It will be played out over the next 10 to 20 years. Read Steven Zettner's article "McCracken Shoots Down Allandale Town Center Proposal" and Paulette Kern's "VMU Update." ANA is not against VMU. We just don't think a one-size fits all approach makes sense for all tracts along Burnet Road and Anderson Lane.

I am sad to announce that Allan McMurtry has resigned from ANA's Executive Committee (EC). Those of us on the Committee were unable to change his mind. There is no question that Allan loves this neighborhood. He has a long history of involvement with Allandale and I have learned a lot from him. He has challenged us all during his time on the EC to think about and do what's best for the neighborhood. I am particularly grateful for his leadership and hard work on the Northcross Committee and for the many hours he has put into helping us work through the VMU application process. He's resigning from the EC but promises to continue help out as needed.

I also announced my intention to resign as President of ANA at the end of my term in September. I made this

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announcement at the ANA general membership meeting in March. In addition to serving as President, I am also editor of the newsletter and I maintain the web site. It is too much. I would like to continue working on the web site and the newsletter and give someone else the opportunity to serve as President of ANA.

Send us your comments. We put this newsletter out six times a year and rarely hear from you. It's time we had a "Letter to the Editor" section where we devote space to neighbor comments. That goes for photos as well. If you have a neighborhood-related photo, send it along. Email your comments to [allandaleneighbor@gmail.com](mailto:allandaleneighbor@gmail.com) or send them in a letter to Allandale Neighbor, PO Box 10886, Austin, TX 78766-1886. Be sure to title it "Letter to the Editor." Comments on stories are welcomed as are suggestions for future articles. Your thoughts on what you want to see in the newsletter and what you don't are also welcomed? ❖

## VMU Update

*Paulette Kern*

It is my understanding that Allandale's VMU Opt In/Opt Out (OI/OO) Application will go before the Planning Commission and then the City Council for approval, modification, or disapproval in late April or early May. If Council votes to disapprove ANA's application and apply VMU zoning to all the properties on the Allandale side of Burnet Road and Anderson Lane, we could see our population more than double over the next 15 years, with a

tunnel of 30 to 60 foot tall buildings consisting of apartments over retail sitting some 20 to 25 feet from Burnet Road and Anderson Lane, going straight up.

Many of you still don't know what VMU is, and I can appreciate that. It is very complex. The city ordinance is about an inch thick. However, when you see the first VMU project at Burnet and Lawnmont go up in the near future, you will have a vivid picture of what the City wants for us and all neighborhoods along what they call "transit corridors."

Maybe you think this could be grand. Perhaps you think Burnet Road is an eyesore and anything would be better than it is now. But please think through the consequences of this type of development. Weigh the positives and negatives and the overall effect on Allandale.

Remember, we have the Super Wal-Mart coming with an estimated 25,000 vehicle trips per day, and development at the Domain projected at 80,000 inhabitants, many of whom will come down Burnet Road as their "transit corridor." Has the City made plans to improve Burnet Road or Anderson Lane or begun a plan with CapMetro to improve mass transit? No. But Council Member McCracken says that VMU actually doesn't create traffic. And will the small businesses unique to our area be able to afford the retail space in a new VMU development? Probably not, say the ones we've spoken with.

Don't rush in a panic to put your home on the market. Consider making your voice heard by calling and writing your City Council members. Ask them to support ANA's Application. In part,



*An example of VMU.*

it seeks to remove most properties along Burnet Road from the VMU Overlay District. Most of those properties are shallow lots that have significant risks of negative impacts on the adjacent single family properties. The Application also seeks to remove other properties that are larger and extend deep into our neighborhood.

Do you know someone who has been active in this VMU issue? Contact them. If not, contact an Allandale Executive Committee member. Ask them how you can help to support the Allandale OI/OO Application. We'll be organizing ourselves, and each of us needs to be involved. There is SO much at stake!

We'll be contacting each of the Commission members and Council members by e-mail, phone, and/or mail. We'll need to be concise and direct in our communications. We must ask each of these representatives to support the Allandale Application, and we must let them know that we are watching their actions.

*Continued on page 4*

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## VMU Update

*continued from page 3*

A couple of ANA EC members met with Council Member McCracken, the key Council proponent of VMU, in March. We were observers as another multi-neighborhood group sought middle ground to negotiate with the City on VMU. We received no encouragement for negotiation. Mr. McCracken has worked for four years on the Design Standards that included the VMU Ordinance and demonstrated an unwillingness to modify it. The change we're asking for is to delay providing the density incentives to developers of VMU-zoned properties in order to use those incentives to get desired qualities such as parks or green space included in these developments. Mr. McCracken stayed firm on that point, even though the park at the Triangle is what Mr. McCracken now finds most meaningful to the quality of life there. Mr. McCracken intends to apply VMU in a "one size fits all" manner, with no density caps. He states that a lack of density caps gives developers incentive to build affordable housing (10% of rental units would be priced to allow those at 80 %

of Austin median income). In return, developers would receive "incentives": only 60% of needed parking would be required, building setbacks would be reduced, and floor-to-area ratio requirements would be reduced or eliminated (with no minimum square footage requirements for apartments).

Watch for the notices regarding the Application hearings before the Planning Commission and City Council. The City will mail a notice to people who own property within 300 feet of the VMU properties in question. Once it is available, the notice will also be posted on the Allandale website.

Be assured that the VMU overlay will drastically alter the character of all of Allandale. We do have an opportunity to affect the outcome of the Council vote with input from the citizens of Allandale, but we will need lots of help.

You will find contact information for Planning Commission at:

<http://malford.ci.austin.tx.us/boards/results.cfm?bid=43>

You will find contact information for City Council at: <http://cityofaustin.org/council/contacts.htm> ❖

## Tree Trimming

*Michelle McAfee, Austin Energy*

Trees are an integral part of life in Austin and the surrounding communities, and they provide us with many pleasures and benefits. Reliable electric service is also an essential part of modern life. We count on electricity from the moment we wake in the morning until we turn off the lights at night. Fairly often, especially during storms, vegetation interferes with the ability to provide reliable electric service to you and your neighbors. This is why Electric Utilities are required by law to maintain a clearance between tree limbs and power lines and electrical equipment.

When tree limbs come into contact with power lines or equipment, this can result in power outages, fires, or personal injury, and it can also affect the natural growth of a tree. To address these issues, all electric utilities must develop a tree pruning program. Austin Energy has developed a proactive Utility Forestry program with an experienced staff of four degreed Foresters and an additional nine Certified Arborists. Our team of Forestry experts ensures that all

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Before any routine utility tree trimming work is begun, Austin Energy informs the representatives of any applicable Neighborhood Association listed with the City of Austin. Austin Energy contractors, under the management of Austin Energy staff, then attempt to contact each property owner to discuss the work to be done on his or her individual property. Through this practice, Austin Energy keeps its customers informed about the work to be done in their yard and answers any questions property owners may have at the time. This notification process is pretty exceptional. In fact, Austin Energy is one of only two electric utilities nationwide that has such a process.

Most importantly, all tree work adheres to stringent guidelines that have been recognized by the International Society of Arboriculture. Directional pruning and collar cuts are two examples of this type of work. Guidelines also include scheduling routine line clearance work around Oak Wilt windows and painting all oak wounds to minimize the threat of Oak Wilt in our service area.

Occasionally it is necessary to remove a tree. Austin Energy looks at the tree species, the condition of the tree, and whether the location of the tree creates a significant ongoing threat to power lines or equipment before any decision to remove is reached. In these instances, Austin Energy works with the property owner to remove the tree. Our website, [www.austinenenergy.com/go/trees](http://www.austinenenergy.com/go/trees), lists a variety of replacement trees that may be available from Austin Energy when a tree must be removed from a property.

Remember, the key to enjoying the benefits of trees is to select the right tree and plant it in the right place. Austin Energy is dedicated to this philosophy and works with our customers to implement it throughout our system. In addition, Austin Energy funds the planting of about 5,000 trees a year throughout the Austin community. ❖

## Northcross Mall Lawsuit

*Allan McMurtry*

The attorneys for Allandale have filed a petition before the District Court in Austin, Texas seeking payment of part of our legal fees as they relate to our lawsuit. We have incurred expenses due to the claim filed against us by Lincoln Properties and have filed to be recompensed for those expenses.

This petition will be heard on April 14th at 9:00AM in the 200th Judicial District Court of Travis County in the Travis County Courthouse. Once this matter is taken care of, we will be filing an appeal of the original verdict from November of 2007. This appeal will be before the Texas Court of Appeals.

This case is a long way from being over. The City of Austin has paid legal fees in excess of \$625,000 at the rate of over \$400 an hour. At the same time, Allandale has incurred legal expenses in excess of \$60,000, and RG4N has incurred expenses above that. ANA and its membership feel strongly that Austin, or any City, should abide by its own ordinances. Case law is specific to this issue. Regardless of whether Austin violated its own ordinances in the past, the City is no more above the

law than are the citizens of Austin.

This case has merit, and we believe that we will ultimately prevail in a court of law. Allandale has long maintained that this is not an issue for or against Wal-Mart. It is about the City making decisions that impact citizens without providing citizen public hearings. ANA will continue to stand up for our rights in this matter. Adequate hearings ensure common knowledge and provide a forum to bring to light critical issues associated with large super discount centers, regardless of who builds them. ❖

## Allandale Garage Sale—May 3rd

*Linnea Anderson*

The annual Allandale Neighborhood Garage Sales will be held Saturday, May 3, 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Spend a day strolling the neighborhood, greeting neighbors, and maybe bag a bargain while you're at it. The sale includes the entire neighborhood. Advertising will be in the *Austin American Statesman*, online, and via flyers.

### Suggestions:

- Join forces with a couple neighbors. A larger sale will draw more traffic.
- Put signs and/or balloons on major cross streets or intersections to lead people to your sale. One idea is to use a box, place signs on four sides, and then weigh the box down with rocks or bricks.
- Keep signs simple. Use arrows to direct drivers
- Contact the coordinator by April 28th to be listed on the online map.
- Email: [garagesale08@fitmom.info](mailto:garagesale08@fitmom.info) or call 750-8902 ❖

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## Neighborhood Safety Committee Call for Block Captains

Laura DiCarlo

The newly formed ANA Safety Committee is implementing a block captain system to help foster a safe and cohesive community. According to the APD Neighborhood Watch Program manual, the two principles upon which Neighborhood Watches operate are a) neighbors watching out for each other, and b) creating a sense of identity within the neighborhood. Block captains are people who help facilitate both of these things. A block captain is someone who looks out for suspicious activities in the neighborhood and contacts neighbors via e-mails, flyers, phone calls, or face-to-face contact about upcoming events or important information in the community. It is a very small time commitment but can have a tremendous affect.

Shoalwood Avenue resident Christian Bowers is a perfect example of someone who has already been acting as a block captain. He was concerned about a recent break-in and other suspicious activity on his street, and he gathered

neighbors who were out walking dogs to discuss the situation. They shared with each other who is home during the day and discussed the possibility of neighborhood signs that could be placed at corner houses and have flyers attached with information such as a weekly crime report, lost and found animal report, and fun information as well. These would be nice-looking Allandale signs separate from the neighborhood watch signs.

The Safety Committee will explore this idea further. Neighbors on Albata, Ellise, and in the Shoalmont area have had organized block captains for years, and there may be other areas that are already doing this as well. Committee member Laura DiCarlo has been recruiting block captains via the listserv, Gullett newsletter,

and in person on Election Day at Gullett. Nineteen people have signed up to date, and dozens more are needed. If you are interested in becoming a block captain or if you already have an organized system on your block, please contact Laura at 323-6929 or [lbdicarlo@yahoo.com](mailto:lbdicarlo@yahoo.com). ❖

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*Fido B. Good*

Pet waste is a subject everyone likes to avoid, but pet waste is more than smelly and unsightly: it is a health risk to pets and people, especially children. When it rains, pet waste left on trails, sidewalks, and grassy areas can wash

Austin City Code 3-4-6 DEFECATION BY A DOG OR CAT:

“An owner or handler shall promptly remove and sanitarily dispose of feces left on public or private property by a dog or cat being handled by the person, other than property owned by the owner or handler of the dog or cat.”



- Bring plastic bags with you when walking your dog. Use the bag as a glove to scoop the waste, then turn the bag inside out and tie to seal. No mess!
- If you forget the bag, look for mutt mitt dispensers in City parks.
- Remove pet waste from your yard before it rains.
- Place a scoop the poop sign in your yard to encourage your neighbors to scoop (call 974-2550).

Visit [www.scoopthepoopaustin.org](http://www.scoopthepoopaustin.org) for more infor-mation.❖

*Joe Reynolds*

The Executive Committee of the ANA has set a goal of 1,000 paid memberships in 2008. If you're reading this newsletter, you have one very good reason to get out your checkbook and mail in your membership today.

Goal: 1,000 members  
Current number  
of members: 265 ❖

Become a paying member. See back page for more information.

[illegible]

# ANA General Membership Meeting Minutes: March 27, 2008

**Executive Committee Members**  
Present: Tom Linehan, Mary Jean Matus, Joe Reynolds, Cynthia Keohane, Donna Beth McCormick, Paulette Kern, George Roman, Margie Gordon.

The meeting was opened by the President Tom Linehan. George moved to defer reading of the previous General Membership meeting minutes until the next General Membership meeting; seconded by Joe; motion passed unanimously.

**Treasurer's report:** Joe Reynolds  
Current Balance is \$19,774.18  
General: \$ 9,865.06  
Fundraising: \$ 3,358.08  
Savings: \$ 6,551.04

**Membership:** Joe Reynolds  
Current membership at 265 households.

**Northcross:** Tom Linehan  
Hearing is scheduled for April 14, 2008 (9:00 am) in the 200th Judicial District Court (ANA, Lincoln Properties, and City of Austin) for determination of legal fees relating to the ANA lawsuit filed in November 2007.

**Zoning and Planning:** Paulette Kern  
Paulette gave an overview of the Vertical Mixed Use (VMU) ordinance and ANA's application for opting in/out of VMU zoning overlay with/without incentives (filed June 4,

2007). ANA to meet with City of Austin's Planning Commission and Austin City Council.

**Beautification:** Linnea Anderson  
Upcoming events include:  
■ It's My Park Day (April 12, 2008). Volunteers can sign up online at <http://www.austinparks.org/itsmypark.html>.  
■ Coyote Presentation at Northwest Recreation Center (April 14, 2008)  
■ Annual Allandale Garage Sale (May 3, 2008)

**Bylaws:** Tom Linehan (Dan Jones absent)  
Bylaws are under revision and are to be submitted for approval at the September General Meeting.

**Safety:** Donna Beth  
Recruitment of Block Captains and volunteers continue. Current Crime Watch signs are being inventoried and those in need of replacement are being identified. Officer David Crowder (APD) announced that he will no longer serve as District Representative for Allandale Neighborhood effective April 6, 2008. A replacement has not yet been assigned. In the meantime, another district representative can be reached by calling 974-5545.

**Other business (reports)**  
**Austin Neighborhood Council:** Cynthia Keohane  
Meetings are open to the public and held the 4th

Wednesday of every month, 6:00 pm, Austin Energy Building, Barton Springs Rd.

**Celebrate Allandale Picnic:** Mary Jean/Joe Reynolds  
April 6, 1-6 pm, Northwest Park  
Event sponsorships received to-date include: Body Business Health Club & Spa, Amy's Ice Cream, Phil's Ice House, Pearl Productions, and Matus Properties, Inc. Approximately 15 vendors have reserved booth space.

**Announcements:**  
■ Alan McMurtry resigned his position as Vice President of ANA and his position on the Board effective March 12, 2008.  
■ Tom Linehan announced that he would be stepping down as President of ANA at the end of his term in September but would continue work on the Communications Committee maintaining the web site and assisting with the newsletter.

Joe moved to adjourn the meeting; Cynthia seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm. ❖

## HYDE PARK GYM

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## Revising ANA's Bylaws

Kay Newell

The Allandale Neighborhood Association has formed a Bylaws Review Committee chaired by Dan Jones, ANA Executive Committee member. The committee is in the process of updating the bylaws and bringing them into compliance with the Texas Non-Profit Corporation Act as needed. The current plans are to continue the revision process through the summer, with a review and possible adoption of new bylaws at the ANA Annual Meeting in September. ❖

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## Become a Green Neighborhood!

Linnea Anderson

When you ask Austinites what they like best about our city, our outdoor lifestyle is always near the top of the list. In large part that's because we are surrounded by accessible waterways—the creeks, lakes, and springs that connect us to our environment.

The City of Austin's Green Neighbor Program raises awareness about how individual actions can protect our environment and waterways. The Clean Creek Challenge booklet provides useful suggestions on Earth-wise landscaping, water conservation, car and pet care tips, toxic chemicals, and much more. You can use the booklet as a helpful refer-

ence, to test how "green" you are, or take part in the Clean Creek Challenge by scoring your eco-friendly actions to win either passes to Barton Springs pool or Green Neighbor t-shirts. If enough of your neighbors become Green Neighbors, you can become a Green Neighborhood and be eligible for neighborhood beautification awards such as landscape design for a common area.

To learn more about the Green Neighbor program please visit [www.cityofaustin.org/watershed/greenneighbor/](http://www.cityofaustin.org/watershed/greenneighbor/)

Copies of the Clean Creek Challenge booklet are also available at all Austin libraries.

You could be rewarded with prizes for helping out, but more importantly, you will be rewarded with clean and plentiful water for us and future generations! ❖

## JOIN ANA!

A membership form is located on the back of this newsletter

# Allandale Veterinary Clinic



[www.AllandaleVetClinic.com](http://www.AllandaleVetClinic.com)

454-6719

Celebrate National Pet Week 5/4-5/10  
Fun, Food, Contests, Prizes! What a Difference Pets Make  
Open House Sat. May 10th 10:00-2:00 pm

visit our website for details, and fun kid's contests.



## 30 Years and Still as Popular as Ever—the Omelettry

Tom Linehan

It has been years since I ate at the Omelettry, but it hasn't changed...and that's a good thing. The place has been at its current location on the corner of Burnet Road and 48th Street for 30 years, and it's still one of the more popular breakfast spots in north Austin. I visited the restaurant three times in the past seven days, and there was always a steady flow of customers. Just as I had remembered, the outdoor sign board at the entrance was covered with posters. Inside, I found tables with vinyl tablecloths, a friendly wait staff, and customers of all ages — also as I had remembered. Fortunately, my last visit was on a weekday, and I was able to get seated right away. Be prepared to wait if you're going on a weekend morning.

The Omelettry specializes in omelets and pancakes; however, they also serve sandwiches, soups, and other fare. Although they have a variety of omelets

to choose from, for me, their House Special omelet with grilled onions, mushrooms, cheese, and ham with a side of buttermilk pancakes was the obvious choice. The young wait staff are friendly and efficient. I like the fact that they pool tips, so you don't ever have to wait long for a coffee or water refill.

I met with Kenny Carpenter, owner of the Omelettry, on a Friday morning. He stands about 6' tall, with a medium-length beard and graying hair, and is the kind of guy that makes it easy to start up a conversation. He said the idea of opening a restaurant that specialized in omelets was an idea he brought with him from Santa Barbara. For about six months he worked at a place there called Omelets, Etc. Austin didn't have any-



*The Omelettry, circa 1978.*

thing like it at the time, and he thought it might do well here. Immediately before coming to Austin, Kenny lived and worked at a restaurant in Denton. While he thought about opening up in Denton, his friends at UT convinced him his chances for success would be better in Austin. Nothing was certain, but Kenny and his girlfriend—later his wife—moved to Austin in 1978 to give it a try. Kenny said he only had \$10,000, which he thought would probably just get him



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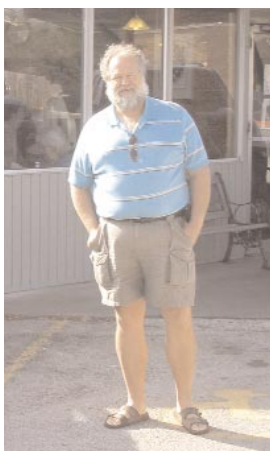


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Owner Kenny Carpenter.

building, which had a For Rent sign in the window. He looked in, saw it was already set up as a restaurant, and that concluded his location search.

Back then, his only competition was Denny's, IHOP, and Flapjack Canyon down in south Austin. Initially business was slow, and as part of the novelty of the place the wait staff would juggle. Word soon got out, though, that the restaurant had good omelets and the wait staff would juggle for you while you waited for your food. I don't know if many people remember the juggling

through three or four months. Only 23, he thought if it didn't work, he'd just do something else. His market analysis regarding location consisted of driving around until he came upon the current

wait staff because it apparently didn't last long. The new breakfast destination got too busy to keep it up.

Kenny says the restaurant has maintained a pretty steady business over the years. It trailed off a bit in 2000 and 2001, causing him to close at night. Burnet Road gets pretty quiet at night, and there wasn't enough business to justify staying open late. Since then, the Omelettry's hours have been 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM, and that is just fine with Kenny. At one time he was a partner in two other Austin restaurants, but it made his life too hectic. In 1981, he partnered with one of his former wait staff and opened up Omelettry West on Lake Austin Boulevard. The partnership lasted until 1986 when Kenny sold off his interest. That restaurant was renamed Magnolia Cafe.

The Omelettry is the only restaurant Kenny has now, and that suits him. His 25-year old son Jesse works at the restaurant waiting tables and managing the front. Jesse has been working the restaurant since he was 12 years old and seems to enjoy it. Like his dad he's a friendly guy, making him a good fit

with the customers.

One of the memorable events at the Omelettry



Jessie Carpenter and patron.

was the recent filming of a Quentin Tarantino and Robert Rodriguez movie, Grindhouse. The film crew set up the back of the restaurant to look like a greasy spoon joint in Lebanon, Tennessee. As Kenny says, the experience was all right, and the job paid well, but he's not interested in doing it again. It was disruptive. They had to close for three days and abandon their regular customers.

If you are like me and you have not been to the Omelettry in a while, let me suggest you check it out. If you've never been at all, you must go. It's one of those places that represent a part of Austin that many hope sticks around. Dress casual.

Omelettry, 4811 Burnet Rd, (512) 453-5062. Menu available at [www.allmenus.com/menus/58834/The-Omelettry](http://www.allmenus.com/menus/58834/The-Omelettry). ❖



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# Celebrate Allandale

Tom Linehan

**T**he Second Annual Celebrate Allandale picnic has come and gone. Once again it was a great day in the park with friends and neighbors. The entertainment was outstanding—the McCallum Steel Band was incredible and Belville Outfit is the band to catch now before they become big stars drawing big crowds. Catch them at a local venue around town. Celebrate Allandale had it all: good food, happy children, and the perfect mix of weather, setting, and events that made for a delightful Sunday afternoon in the park.

## Thanks to Everyone who Helped Put it Together!

A special thanks to Mary Jean Matus who did a superb job of orchestrating and working the event and to Joe Reynolds for his work before, during, and when it was all over. A number of volunteers contributed to the event. It was truly a community event. Celebrate Allandale shows off Allandale and what a great neighborhood it is. ❖





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## Electric Vehicles in Allandale

Nathan Dooley

Electric cars are trendy, but are they useful in our neighborhood?

At some point in the last several months, you may have noticed a pair of blue three-wheeled trucks parked in a driveway on Shoal Creek Boulevard. This is Rhonda and Michael Hall's house, where they've lived for the last seven years, along with their two young children and a 19-year-old who recently moved out on his own.

Rhonda and Michael drive these matching electric two-seater trucks. Over the past year, they've also used an electric sedan (yes, it seats four) and another model of electric truck—all from Rhonda's brother's ZAP (Zero Air Pollution) dealership in San Antonio. The model they now drive, the Xebra, tops out around 40 miles per hour and can drive about 25 miles on a single charge. Options such as solar panels and extended range batteries are available.

According to the ZAP website (<http://www.zapworld.com>), the company has delivered electric vehicles to customers in over 75 countries. Its Xebra truck uses roughly one to three cents of electricity per mile. The ZAP vehicles' lack of harmful emissions pleases eco-conscious consumers, and ZAPs also appear to be popular choices for senior citizens and high school students, perhaps because of the relatively low sticker price.

Rhonda graciously let me take a spin around the neighborhood in one of her family's trucks. While at first I had a tough time finding a comfortable seating position (I'm 6'2" tall on a good day), the truck was actually quite drivable. The ride is a bit jerky because of a touchy accelerator and brake and a stiff suspension, but the Xebra has a tight turning radius and has no problem



*The ZAP truck is an electric two seater.*

maintaining speed on residential roads. It seats two, and has a flatbed that can tilt to dump cargo.

Rhonda finds her truck particularly well suited to short trips, such as her commute to work at Seton Hospital. She often drives it to nearby grocery stores, the dry cleaner, and People's Pharmacy. She has taken her truck as far as North Austin Hospital and Sam's Club, and Michael occasionally drives his to work downtown at the Austin Convention Center. She still uses her minivan, but has gone from filling it up with gas once a week to once a month.

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The additional insurance costs of the electric trucks are low, since they are insured as motorcycles.

The ZAP Xebra is not perfect. Its 25-mile range won't allow long trips, although the range can be extended somewhat if the vehicle is charged during the trip. The truck's ride is most comfortable at around 25–30 miles per hour, which not only rules out highways but also makes it significantly slower than traffic on many fast roads such as Lamar or Burnet. Also, the Xebra won't work for very small children, since the seatbelts will accommodate a booster seat but not a car seat.

All things considered, would Rhonda recommend this vehicle to other Allandale residents? "Yes, if they're buying it for the right purpose—to supplement an existing vehicle—but not as a replacement." ♦

## Mobile Food Establishment Restrictions in Allandale

*Cynthia Keohane*

The ANA Executive Committee voted at our February meeting to adopt more stringent regulations governing the location and hours of operation for mobile food establishments. A mobile food establishment in Austin is generally a trailer located in a parking lot or a vehicle that drives to locations such as construction sites. There are many fine examples of mobile food establishments, such as "Hey, Cupcake!" The restrictions should help these establishments thrive alongside

nearby residential neighborhoods such as Allandale.

The City of Austin Mobile Food Establishment Ordinance contains a number of requirements for operators. The ordinance is in Section 25-2-812 of the City Code, which is available on the City of Austin website (<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us>). The City offered a 30-day period for neighborhoods to submit an application, and provided a list of additional regulations that neighborhoods can adopt. The Executive Committee approved all of the additional regulations.

The existing ordinance, without the more stringent regulations, prohibits operation from 3 AM to 6 AM. In other words, establishments can operate 21 hours a day. The EC felt the late hours are undesirable. The more stringent regulations prohibit operating after 10 PM in most locations.

City staff will review the ANA application and City Council will vote on adopting our proposal later this year. Following is a list of the additional regulations:

- A mobile food establishment must be located 50 feet or further from property zoned SF-1 through SF-5 or further than 50 feet from where townhouses, duplexes, or single-family houses are located.
- mobile food establishment may operate between the hours of 6:00 AM and 10:00 PM if it is further than 50 feet and not more than 300 feet from a property zoned SF-1 through SF-5.
- A mobile food establishment may operate between the hours of 6:00 AM and 10:00 PM if it is further

than 50 feet and not more than 300 feet from a property where townhouses, duplexes, and single-family houses are located.

- A mobile food establishment may operate between the hours of 6:00 AM and 3:00 AM if it is located more than 300 feet from property zoned SF-1 through SF-5 or further than 300 feet from where townhouses, duplexes, or single-family houses are located. ♦

## ANA Votes to Prohibit Parking of Motorized Vehicles on Front Yards

*Cynthia Keohane*

The ANA Executive Committee voted at our January meeting to prohibit the parking of motorized vehicles on the front and side yards of single family residences. The City ordinance designates February as the month for neighborhood associations to submit their applications.

Specific ordinance requirements are in Section 12-5-29 of the City Code, available on the City of Austin website (<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us>). It contains definitions for driveway, front and side yards, and motor vehicles. Note that the ordinance does apply to inoperable motor vehicles.

The COA website also contains a map of Restricted Parking Areas, showing which neighborhoods have already opted in. The map includes nearby Brentwood, Wooten, North Shoal Creek, Highland, and Hyde Park. ♦

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## Allandale Calendar Update Neighborhood Association 2008 Calendar

Day	Date	Activity
Thursday	24 April	ANA EC Meeting - Ralph Yarborough Library, 2200 Hancock Drive
Friday	25 April	Call for articles for June newsletter
Saturday	3 May	ANA Garage Sale - Location to be determined
Saturday	17 May	Tyke and Bike Ride - Northland Drive
Thursday	22 May	ANA EC Meeting - Ralph Yarborough Library, 2200 Hancock Drive
Monday	16-20 June	June <i>Allandale Neighbor</i> delivered
Wednesday	25 June	Call for articles for August newsletter
Thursday	26 June	ANA EC Meeting - Ralph Yarborough Library, 2200 Hancock Drive
Friday	4 July	Allandale Fourth of July Parade
Thursday	24 July	ANA EC Meeting - Ralph Yarborough Library, 2200 Hancock Drive
Tuesday	5 August	National Night Out
Friday	15-21 August	August <i>Allandale Neighbor</i> delivered
Monday	25 August	Call for articles for October newsletter
Thursday	28 August	ANA EC Meeting - Ralph Yarborough Library, 2200 Hancock Dr, Austin, TX
Thursday	25 September	ANA General Membership Meeting      Ralph Yarborough Library, 2200 Hancock Dr
Wednesday	15-21 October	October <i>Allandale Neighbor</i> delivered
Tuesday	21 October	Annual MoNAC meeting - Westminster Manor at 6:30 pm
Thursday	23 October	ANA EC Meeting - Ralph Yarborough Library, 2200 Hancock Drive
Saturday	25 October	Allandale Masquerade Ball
Monday	10 November	Call for articles for December newsletter
Monday	15-19 December	December <i>Allandale Neighbor</i> delivered

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# Gullett Good News Column

Stephanie Schultz-Smith

## Awards Multiply for Gullett Teachers

Gullett teachers Ann Valentino (5th grade) and Sheryl Hardin (2nd grade) presented at a session of the National Council of the Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) conference in early April. The Gullett teachers were selected by the group to lead a session, titled Delving into Data and Investigations and Inspirations. The national conference was held in Salt Lake City, Utah, and serves as a powerful staff development opportunity in the area of math education.

Valentino and Hardin based the activities in their session on their classroom units: Investigations in Number, Data, and Space. In the units, they combine technology with hands-on activities to help students develop an

understanding of data and statistics.

Gullett Librarian Kay Gooch may have felt like she grew a few inches when she was selected as one of 24 librarians from across Texas to attend to the TALL (Texas Accelerated Library Leaders) Texans Leadership Development Institute. The weeklong leadership seminar, which will take place this summer, is sponsored by the Texas Library Association and brings together a diverse group of academic, public, and school librarians from around the state.

## Calling all Kindergartners

On May 6, Gullett Elementary invites children who will be five by September 1 (along with their parents or guardians) to enroll in kindergarten. While parents complete paper work, the children get a quick introduction to grade school by visiting a kindergarten classroom. Parents should bring the child's birth certificate, immunization records, social security card or number, proof of residence (electric bill), and

the driver's license of the person registering the child. Registration starts at 8:30 AM and lasts about 90 minutes.

## It's Great to Be a Second Grader at Gullett!

It's great to be a Gullett student in general, but many Gullett Geckos fondly remember their second grade year. For second graders, learning is active! From technology and math, to dirt and gardening, to clay and movie production, second graders are always on the move. Some of their numerous hands-on learning activities include:

- Ready, set, roll: Second graders create characters out of clay and then produce a movie starring their clay-mation characters.
- I spy a butterfly: Second graders investigate the lifecycle of the Monarch Butterfly as they begin their lives in chrysalises in the school's own butterfly gardens.
- Meet in the garden: Second graders grow their own vegetable gardens

*Continued on page 18*

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## Gullett Good News

*Continued from page 17*

and schedule a "Garden Gala" to celebrate.

### Making Noise at the Silent Auction

Heavenly Desserts, Devilish Deals was the theme of Gullett's Silent Auction this year. The event, held on Saturday, April 12, at Chez Zee included a silent auction and raffle. Party-goers were treated to delicious deserts while

they placed their highest bid on the auction items that caught their eyes. Parents and local businesses donated the auction items up for grabs.

### Important School Dates

May 26 – Memorial Day holiday.

June 4 – Last day of the 2007–08. ❖

## Dog Talk: Children and Dogs

*Cheryl Silver 512-454-7219,  
csilver2@austin.rr.com*

This column is typically about 600 words long, so the notion that I would take on such a huge topic in such limited space is laughable. That said, I thought I would just touch on a few points that come to mind based on recent events, and I want to offer some thoughts on how to aim for positive outcomes.

Many people envision living with children and a dog in total bliss. My recommendation is to work on making this happen; don't just hope. The following tips are intended to reduce the likelihood that someday you will call a rescue group or go to a shelter in tears to relinquish your dog because of worries about his or her behavior around your child.

Teach your dog basic manners, and use those basic manners day in and day out. Work on a solid "down-stay."

Crate train your dog. Don't use the crate as a prison; use it as a place for the dog to relax. Never allow a child to bother a dog who is resting in her crate.

Start walking around your house with odd objects in your hands; e.g., a golf club, a spatula, a ping pong paddle, bamboo sticks, a ladle. Wave your arms around with objects in your hand, and give your dog treats while this is going on. This will create a positive association with this kind of activity for your dog. Keep in mind how often you see little children waving sticks around and how often you see toddlers running through the house with objects in their hands. If a dog is unfamiliar with this behavior it can scare them and even put them on the defensive.

Lie on the floor and do crazy exercises. Ideally, your dog will learn to remain in a "down-stay" while you are doing this. Toss her a treat every so often as you exercise. This "flailing" around will not seem alarming to your dog when he encounters a young child being goofy.

Practice sitting on the floor and eating snacks while your dog remains in a "down-stay."

Take your dog to local parks where

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children play. The children will likely be running around and yelling. Take a chair for you and set it up quite a distance from the children. As your dog watches the activity, give him fabulous treats. Hopefully, he will soon lie down and relax and just watch. Visit that same spot frequently. Once you realize he is calm, move a little closer. Allow your dog to become relaxed at this reduced distance. Over a period of weeks, hopefully he will become more and more tolerant of this behavior.

Working on the above tasks will put you way ahead of the curve. Even better, strongly consider whether it makes sense to get a dog before you start a family. Many, many, many loving, devoted, caring couples relinquish their dogs when children arrive. Many times I have heard them say, "I never thought I would be a person who would give up my dog, but I have to think of my child." I am not suggesting that anyone put their dog ahead of their child.

That said, I have placed dogs with families who plan to have children. The dogs have been super-sweet dogs (many, proven with children) and the families have been open to training. Both husband

and wife have been on board with the plan.

I have also placed many dogs in homes with children. I aim to adopt to homes where the children are old enough to understand directions and where parents provide clear and consistent guidance to their children...it can work beautifully.

I am always here to help you with problems and plans. Please don't hesitate to contact me. ❖

## Constable's Notebook

*Constable Bruce Elfant*

As spring approaches, our thoughts turn to gardening, baseball season, summer vacations, and, for more and more Austinites, additional daylight hours for solar power systems to generate electricity for our homes. According to officials at Austin Energy, the number of Austin homes powered at least partly by solar power has increased dramatically over the past several years. The increased demand for solar power systems is fueled by the fact that coal-fired power plants contribute to health problems, the (up to 75%)

rebates offered by Austin Energy, and the promise of significantly lower energy bills. The City of Austin, hoping to reduce the need to invest in expensive and polluting power plants, has set a goal to generate 100 megawatts (MW) of solar energy by 2020. My wife and I, motivated by the appeal of reducing our electric bills and generating and consuming clean energy, installed a 3 kilowatt (KW) solar system last year that should lower our electric bills by up to 65%.

Solar power is not for everyone. Even

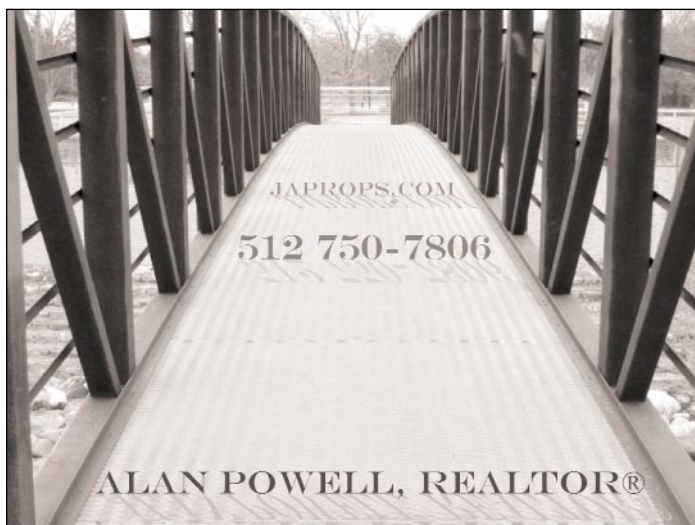
with rebates, solar systems will still cost homeowners upwards of several thousand dollars and the return on one's investment will take several years. Austin Energy requires that in order for solar systems to be most efficient (and be eligible for rebates) solar panels must be installed where there is 100% sunlight from 10:00 AM until 2:00 PM during all times of the year. Many homes shaded by trees or other structures would not be good candidates for solar systems.

A word about trees. According to Austin Energy, "installing 1-kilowatt of solar power is the equivalent of planting 50 trees, which help keep the air clean." Our home was partially shaded by two aging and unhealthy pecan trees that had been unprofessionally pruned away from power lines by Austin Energy. In order to assess which was more environmentally valuable, the trees or the solar panels, we consulted a private arborist about the health of our trees. He told us they were in poor condition and recommended we cut them down. However, the City Arborist initially refused to grant us a permit to cut them down. We had to hire our own arborist (at a cost of several hundred dollars), who wrote a detailed report demonstrating that the trees were diseased and hazardous. We provided a copy of this report to the City Arborist and subsequently received the permit. City officials need to establish a clear policy that balances the value of mature trees with the benefits of solar systems.

Ten companies have been approved by Austin Energy ([austinenenergy.com](http://austinenenergy.com)) to install solar systems. Consumers should get several bids, ask a lot of questions, contact company references and check the Better Business Bureau website ([centraltx.bbb.org](http://centraltx.bbb.org)) in order to select the company most likely to deliver the best services. Because of demand for these systems, it will likely take a month or two for the company selected to obtain the materials and another month or so for installation.

Austin Energy also offers rebates for home energy audits and conservation upgrades and encourages the use of energy efficient appliances and fluores-

*Continued on page 21*



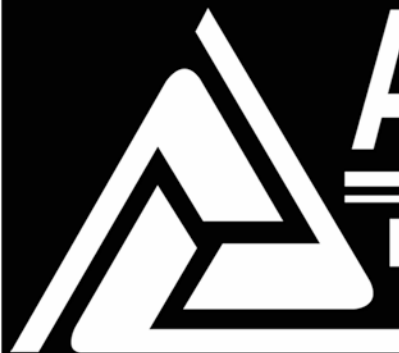
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NCUA



## Constable's Notebook

*Continued from page 19*

cent light bulbs. Was the solar installation worth the expense and time spent? Our solar system and energy efficiency measures have resulted in less demand on fossil fuels for energy, a little less pollution, and last month's electric bill was about \$20. We believe it was. ❖

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## Fire Ants are Back

*Wizzie Brown*

*Texas AgriLife Extension Service  
Extension Program Specialist - IPM*

I've been seeing more and more fire ant mounds popping up all over town lately. With the warmer weather, the ants are becoming more active and noticeable. Since temperatures can vary from day to day in early spring, you need to choose your treatment method carefully.

Fire ant bait may not be the best to use during cooler weather. Fire ants pick up bait as food, but during cooler weather, fire ants usually do not actively forage for food. To check if fire ants are foraging for food, place a hotdog slice, a potato chip, or some peanut butter near a mound. Leave the food item for 15 to 30 minutes, then check to see if fire ants are actively taking it back to the mound. If they are picking up the food, then bait can be applied for managing fire ants. If fire ants are not picking up the food, you may need to try another treatment method.

Broadcast granular products, with active ingredients such as bifenthrin or fipronil, work well when applied in late March or April. These products are applied with a drop or push spreader and then watered into the soil so that the chemical binds in the soil layer. When fire ants work the soil to build their mounds, they come into contact with the chemical and die. These products can provide a year of control, although you may need to spot-treat individual mounds occasionally throughout the year.

Individual mound treatments using liquid drenches, dusts, or granular products can be utilized at any time of year when you see fire ant mounds. Many of these products require water to carry the pesticide down into the mound where the fire ants are located. Failure to use the proper amount of water may not completely kill the mound. Read and follow label instructions before treating mounds.

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512/854-9600. ❖

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# McCracken Shoots Down Allandale Town Center Proposal

*Continued from page 1*

traditional commercial development, or a VMU project that includes both commercial and residential space on different floors of a building.

Both traditional commercial and VMU projects along Burnet and Anderson are subject to the Design Standards ordinance, which requires new buildings to be placed close to the street and to support a “streetscape,” including broad sidewalks, awnings, and streetside trees. The VMU ordinance includes an affordability requirement, whereby 10% of new residential units must be available to people with below-average household incomes. It does not, however, take account of infrastructure changes like new parks or the location of mass transit.

The VMU ordinance approved in January 2007 rezoned all commercial properties within Allandale on Burnet Road and Anderson Lane with VMU. But it also gave neighborhoods a process called “Opt-in/Opt-out” to recommend changes. VMU could be

added or removed from properties, as could certain incentives which the ordinance provided to encourage VMU development over traditional commercial development.

The “Two Nodes” approach would have removed the VMU zoning option from small commercial lots along Burnet that back homeowners. The plan called for additional planning to create two “town centers,” one at Burnet and North Loop and the other along Anderson Lane between Mopac and Burnet. Development incentives from the VMU ordinance would have been deferred until a neighborhood planning process could take place, and a mix of new requirements and incentives agreed upon that positively shaped a town center.

A town center is urban planning jargon for a planned community that includes a mix of residential and commercial uses clumped around a mass transit station and supported by parks, civic features, and bike/pedestrian

paths. They are also called “nodes,” referring to stations on a mass transit line.

Proponents of VMU argue that the new developments are more expensive than traditional development, so they will last longer and be better maintained. The VMU “streetscape” is often pointed to as more aesthetically pleasing than ugly parking lots. Given the high cost of land, proponents fear that the only viable alternative to VMU will be big boxes or car

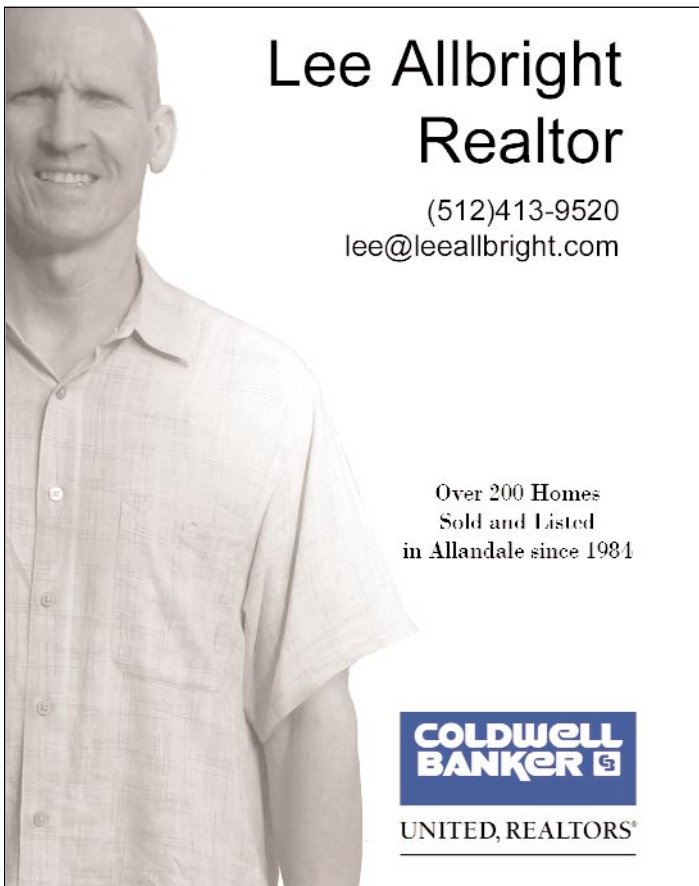
lots. The new residential density from VMU will allow mass transit to run more frequently and become more effective as an alternative to driving.

Both ANA and Sustainable Neighborhoods (SN) have expressed concerns that the VMU ordinance could have unintended consequences. For instance, City officials have stated that new residents living in apartments along streets like Burnet will be more likely to use mass transit. SN researched academic literature to determine what factors cause people to use transit. It found that (astonishingly) people don’t like buses and don’t like to make transfers. They also don’t like to walk too far. To achieve maximum transit use in a mid-town area like Allandale, new residents should be living less than 800 feet from major transit stations, and not just bus stops. Residents living in apartments far from major transit stations will be much more likely to drive, contributing to area traffic congestion.

ANA and SN are also concerned that VMU will lead to lots of people trapped on avenues with no place other than the side of a busy road to walk. Developers have not expressed a willingness to give up acreage on their properties for public open space. That leaves the City, but the Parks Department does not prioritize acquiring parks in the kind of high-density areas that VMU will create.

The VMU ordinance is unprecedented in its scope, rezoning arterial streets throughout the central part of the City, as well as some mid-town streets like Burnet and Anderson. It has the potential to rewrite the City’s genetic code by greatly increasing residential density along these commercial streets. One estimate suggests the rezoning would create capacity to add up to 6,000 new residents on Anderson between Mopac and Burnet.

Many Allandale residents have found the VMU ordinance, with its many acronyms and implications, maddeningly unfathomable.



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ANA and Sustainable Neighborhoods will continue to work on promoting the Two Nodes approach to increasing density along Burnet and Anderson roads, but efforts to date have not left us with much hope that the Planning Commission or the City Council are willing to consider a comprehensive look at what makes sense for the area in terms of VMU. What follows are our efforts to date and the outcomes:

### Highlights of VMU

July 2006 – VMU amendment proposed for the Design Standards ordinance

January 2007 – VMU ordinance approved by City Council

March 2007 – Neighborhoods given 90 days to request adding or removing VMU from various properties along Burnet and Anderson, and to request opting in or out of various VMU incentives.

June 2007 – Allandale submits VMU Opt-in/Opt-out application to City, requesting to add VMU to the Northcross Mall site and two properties near North Loop, and to remove VMU from all other properties along Burnet and Anderson.

July 2007 – Ardent Properties approaches ANA requesting support for rezoning of the Antique Mall property at 5350 Burnet to VMU. ANA had agreed to mixed use and an increase in height to 60 feet for the previous owner of the property, who had promised to build 88 condos. The new developer intends to build 165 luxury apartments.

October 2007 – Residents near the Antique Mall protest the rezoning request, arguing that they had only agreed to allow greater height on the property based on the earlier plan. The City Planning Commission votes 6 to 3 in favor of the developer.

November 2007 – City Council approves the rezoning request 7 to 0. Former VMU team members found an organization, Sustainable Neighborhoods, to lobby for a vision of development on Burnet and Anderson that encourages a sense of community, walkability, and higher mass transit use.

February 2008 – Proposed VMU properties at North Loop that are in Allandale but that were in the Rosedale planning area go before Planning Commission. ANA recommends including VMU but removing VMU incentives. Planning Commission votes 8 to 0 to include the VMU incentives.

March 2008 – ANA, along with representatives from the North Shoal Creek Neighborhood Association and Sustainable Neighborhoods (SN), pitch the SN Two Nodes plan to Council Member Brewster McCracken. McCracken demurs. ❖



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☐ Nominating

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☐ Events

## 2nd Annual Allandale Tyke and Bike Ride

Riders get your bikes tuned up for the second annual Allandale Tyke and Bike ride. This is a .5 mile ride for elementary age and younger children that starts on North Loop adjacent to the parking lot of the Church of Glad Tidings and ends at Amy's Ice Cream. The event takes place, Saturday morning, May 17, 9:00 - 11:00. Acceptable modes of transportation include: bicycles, bicycles with training wheels, tric-

cles, skates, scooters, wheel chairs, skate boards, peddle cars, and strollers. No electric or motorized transportation.

Participants will receive a t-shirt, participant number, a bike attachment (either a water bottle holder or head light), and free ice cream at Amy's at the



end of the ride. Cost is \$20. This is an Allandale fundraiser. Children without a helmet will be provided one free courtesy of Austin Cycling Association. ❖

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